

IN THE SPECIFICATION

Please insert the following after page 11 line 1:

According to these aspects of the invention, there is provided an information center for judging whether digital data which have been recorded on a storage medium loaded into a terminal device and which have undergone a predetermined low bit rate coding process are legitimately purchased data. The information center comprises: receiving means for receiving identification information and inquiry information from said terminal device over a communication line, said identification information identifying said digital data which have undergone said predetermined low bit rate coding process and which are subject to an inquiry, said inquiry information being generated by said terminal device based on said digital data; retrieving means for retrieving said digital data subject to said inquiry from a digital data storage of said information center based on said identification information for identifying said digital data; reference inquiry information generating means for generating reference inquiry information based on the retrieved digital data; comparing means for comparing the generated reference inquiry information with the received inquiry information; inquiry result generating means for generating an inquiry result based on a result of the comparison; and transmitting means which, if the comparison reveals a match between the generated reference inquiry information and the received inquiry information, then transmits predetermined service information to said terminal device.